

**EXPEDITED  
Plan Review****Newsletter**

Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/dem

# Recommendation Statements

Recommendation Statements and their application are still a source of confusion for some Peer Reviewers. To help clear some of that confusion, here is a review of the requirements for Recommendation Statements. Please remember, Recommendation Statements are to be used with the same caution and judgement as an architect's or professional engineer's seal.

Recommendation Statements must not be affixed to a set of construction documents unless the Peer Reviewer has completely reviewed the documents and finds no outstanding code related issues. These statements are the ONLY means Peer Reviewers have to compel the design team to comply with their review comments. If there are disagreements with regard to a section of the code and how it is interpreted, see the related article, *Differing Opinions*.

If a plan has been approved by the Peer Reviewer and subsequently rejected by the County, then the plans must be corrected and re-reviewed by the Peer Reviewer. In this case the Peer Reviewer must initial, date and list the corrected sheets on the original statement OR provide a new statement which lists all corrected sheets for which that statement is applicable.

If the drawings are altered after the permit has been issued, then the revised plans must be reviewed by the Peer Reviewer prior to submission to the County. In this case, the submitter will provide three new sets of drawings containing only those sheets which have been revised. The Peer Reviewer must always affix a new Recommendation Statement to each set of revised drawings.

**DO...**

- affix the Recommendation Statement only after all review comments have been addressed.
- sticky back the statement to the drawings, stamp the statement onto the drawings, or incorporate the statement into the CAD

files.

- affix the Recommendation Statement to the cover sheet of the respective discipline or to the main cover sheet.

**DON'T...**

- affix the Recommendation Statement on the promise that the designer and/or civil engineer will make the recommended changes.
- rely on permit runners or other Peer Reviewers to affix the Recommendation Statement.
- write or sign the statement in pencil.
- attach the statement with tape or staples.

## Differing Opinions

When a Peer Reviewer encounters a differing opinion to a review comment from the designer, there are a number of options available to him or her which will hopefully provide resolution.

The Peer Reviewer or designer may obtain information or an opinion from BOCA as to the intent of a code section if it is not clear in the commentary. To obtain written opinions, the Peer Reviewer or designer must submit the request in writing. BOCA's phone number is **800-323-1103**; their address is: 4051 W. Flossmoor Rd., Country Club Hills, Illinois 60478-5795.

The designer or Peer Reviewer may also contact staff of the Fairfax County Building Plan Review Division. In many cases a detail or diagram is necessary to understand the dispute, therefore it is recommended that the detail be faxed to the plan review offices at **703-324-1614**. For building-related questions, contact or fax Brian Foley; for mechanical, electrical or plumbing questions, contact or fax Tom Ferguson. Both may be reached at **703-324-1645**.

## Turnaround Times

Below are the current average turnaround times by the Building Plan Review Division:

New Construction

Average days\* for 1st submission . . . . . 10  
Average days\* for subsequent submissions . . . . . 5  
Number of County reviews prior to plan approval . . . . . 3

Tenant Layouts

Average days\* for 1st submission . . . . . 6  
Average days\* for subsequent submissions . . . . . 3  
Number of County reviews prior to plan approval . . . . . 3

\* working days

## Classes

The Environmental Services Training Center is offering the following classes.

**CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code: Electrical Section** - This training session is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the electrical section of the CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code. Critical information relating to both inspection items and plan review considerations will be discussed. Specific areas of discussion will include terminology, basic electrical concepts and theories, and interpretation and application of charts, formulas, and tables. Sizing service conductors and grounding electrode systems will also be addressed. Participants must bring a copy of the 1995 CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code to class. **NOTE: this course fulfills the technical module requirement for anyone seeking**

## one and two family certifications in electrical.

**Date:** Thursday, June 10, 1999

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** Environmental Services Training Center, Room 106

**Cost:** \$50.00 per person

**Reading Residential Site Plans** - This introductory course teaches how to identify elements included on site plans, such as drainage and easement symbols, setback notations, and proffers. Common single family and addition plans will be used to illustrate site plan elements. Typical proffers will also be examined in order to give participants a better understanding of the conditions and requirements they outline.

**Date:** Thursday, June 23, 1999

**Time:** 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**Location:** Environmental Services Training Center, Room 106

**Cost:** \$10.00 per person

To register for these classes, call the Environmental Services Training Center at **703-324-1820**. First priority is given to County staff so space is limited. The Environmental Services Training Center is located in the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax.

The Environmental Services Training Center is planning more training classes beyond June. However, at the time of this printing, a list of classes was not available. Please check the County's website for an updated list mid-June. The address is shown in the title block of this newsletter.

## Interpretations

Formal Code Interpretation - 1/1104/98  
BOCA National Building Code/1996  
Sections 1103.1, 1104.2 and 1107.0

**Question:** In structures containing occupancies of Use Groups A, I and R which are provided with the required accessible elements in accordance with Section 1107.0 of the BOCA National Building Code/1996 on an accessible level, is an accessible route required to other levels?

**Answer:** No.

**Comment:** In new construction, an accessible route is not required to every level providing specific exceptions are met. Section 1103.1 states that all structures are required to be fully accessible. Section 1103.1, Exception No. 1 references the specific exceptions that are listed in Sections 1104.0 through 1110.0. If a level contains only elements specifically identified in Section 1107.0 (e.g. assembly seating, sleeping rooms, apartments or guestrooms) and the accessibility requirements are met by the elements provided on an accessible level, then an accessible route to other levels not containing any accessible elements is not required. This is specifically stated in Section 1104.2, which requires the accessible route to connect accessible elements. For small areas, Section 1104.2, Exception No. 2 would be applicable. If accessible elements were required on levels above and below the accessible level, but the aggregate area was less than 3,000 square feet, the aggregate occupant load was not more than 50 and the level did not contain the functions described in the exception (i.e. offices of health care providers, passenger transportation facilities, airports and multi-tenant facilities of Use Group M) an accessible route would not be required to those areas.

## Peer Reviewer Status

Peer Reviewers must attend annual training in order to renew their status as Certified Peer Reviewers. Any reviewer who does not attend this training class will have their certification suspended until he or she attends the next offered class. The next annual training class is October 6, 1999.

## Hot Tips

Peer Reviewers should ensure the items listed below are addressed on the construction documents, if applicable. Many of these items are missed by designers and usually found in the plan review stage.

## Building

- Separation requirements for specific occupancy areas as listed in Table 302.1.1 are not shown on the architectural drawings.

- Accessibility requirements for new tenants in or additions to existing buildings are not always addressed as required in Section 1110.0.
- Floor assemblies supporting rated stair and shaft enclosures are not always shown with the same fire rating as the enclosures.
- Artificial lights for all means of egress components, including the exit discharge at the public way must be shown on the drawings. See Section 1024.1 and the definition of a means of egress in Section 1002.0.

## Mechanical

- Outside air ventilation for assembly occupancies.
- Mechanical and architectural drawings must be coordinated with respect to fire-rated assemblies.
- Smoke dampers in ducts penetrating smoke partitions (per Table 302.1.1).

## Plumbing

- Site plans and plumbing drawings must be coordinated in terms of utilities (sewers, drains, water service).
- Secondary roof drain (emergency over flow) size and/or slope as specified in Section 1108.

## Electrical

- Fire alarm panels must be in compliance with the Fire & Rescue Department's Code Reference Package (available at: [www.co.fairfax.va.us/fire/prev/96code.pdf](http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/fire/prev/96code.pdf))
- Load calculations must reflect demand factors found in the code articles.
- Taps cannot be tapped as specified in Article 240-21B.
- Ducts and pipes must not be located over panels as specified in Article 384-4.